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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1035th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 January 2015

**On the situation in Ukraine and violations of the Minsk agreements
by the Ukrainian authorities**

Mr. Chairperson,

Following our meeting, at which a declaration was adopted calling for an immediate ceasefire by all sides and a meeting of the signatories to the Minsk agreements, the situation in eastern Ukraine remains tense.

There has been no let-up in the shelling and hostilities involving the use of heavy weapons. Ukrainian security force tanks attempted to break through to Donetsk from the villages of Marinka and Aleksandrovka. Donetsk continues to be shelled by multiple-launch rocket systems from Avdiivka, Opitne and Vodyane. What is more, the shelling is indiscriminate. This morning, a shell hit a tram stop in the Leninsky district, killing nine, mainly elderly people. Many people were injured. Two days ago, several people were injured or killed in a similar incident at a bus stop. In Horlivka alone, 109 people were killed in five days. A mother and child were killed near a kindergarten when the Romashka residential district in the town of Stakhanov was shelled by multiple-launch rocket systems. According to initial information, a further four people were injured. However, no processions in memory of the dead have been held in Kyiv and it seems as though no one even notices these casualties.

We express our condolences to the family and friends of those killed and wish the injured a speedy recovery.

We consider what happened to be a crime against humanity and a gross provocation intended to undermine the efforts to resolve the Ukrainian crisis by peaceful means.

We demand an immediate investigation of the crime committed in Donetsk with the participation of OSCE representatives.

Mr. Chairperson,

Where are these mysterious Russian troops that are supposed to be attacking the Ukrainian military and that the Ukrainian representative is talking about all the time? He constantly confuses terms – Russian, ethnic Russian, pro-Russian, adding to the mix some kind of terrorist groups that are killing civilians. Various figures are being “floated”. Well, they could have shown photographs and indicated the checkpoints through which the so-called “tactical battalion groups” passed. The OSCE observers have reported no such movements either in Gukovo or Donetsk. When all is said and done, we have the Forum for Security Co-operation, where all of this could have been demonstrated. However, this was not the case. I might add that a United States Department of State spokeswoman said at a briefing yesterday that she did not have conclusive evidence of a Russian military presence in Ukraine.

We still firmly advocate the immediate cessation of bloodshed. Attempts to take control of one populated area or another must stop.

Yesterday, a Normandy format meeting of foreign ministers took place in Berlin. Its main decision, which was reflected in a joint statement, is strong support for the immediate withdrawal of the sides’ heavy weapons from the line of contact.

We believe that now is not the time for getting bogged down in disputes about the line of contact, but heavy weapons need to be withdrawn from the line that is stipulated in the Minsk agreements of 19 September. Here, our position and that of Ukraine are close. As far as we are aware, the leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics agree with this approach.

It is also vital to reach an agreement on the modalities for the delivery of humanitarian aid and the continued release of detainees. We hope that the Contact Group will meet in the near future to set up subgroups on the relevant aspects of the Minsk agreements.

We continue to advocate a settlement of the conflict on the basis of preserving Ukraine’s territorial integrity and ensuring the rights of the people living in the south-east as part of a Ukrainian State.

To that end, the long-overdue constitutional reform process within the framework of direct and inclusive Ukraine-wide dialogue needs to be launched. Representatives of all the population groups and regions of Ukraine should discuss and agree on the country’s constitutional system so that all Ukrainians without exception can live there comfortably and safely.

Direct contacts between Kyiv and representatives of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics are vital. All other formats with the participation of “external actors” including the Normandy format and the activities of the OSCE are aimed at facilitating direct dialogue among all Ukrainian parties. Russia will continue to help to promote a favourable atmosphere for an approach of this kind to the resolution of the major problems facing Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

At our last meeting, we drew attention to the need to implement all of the provisions of the Minsk agreements, which remain the basis for a settlement. Each of the 12 points of the Protocol requires concretization and interpretation.

As for the need for their comprehensive implementation, some of our partners single out only individual points of the Protocol, primarily monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border, while forgetting about the other provisions. These include the continuation of inclusive national dialogue, the adoption of measures to improve the humanitarian situation in Donbas, the agreement of a programme for the economic recovery of Donbas and the resumption of normal life in the region, the decentralization of power, including through a law on special status, the adoption of a law prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that have taken place, i.e., an amnesty law, and the provision of personal security guarantees for the participants in the consultations.

Unfortunately, Ukraine has fulfilled none of these elements of the Minsk Protocol.

Nobody in Kyiv today makes any reference to national dialogue. Despite the repeated promises, there is a lot of prevarication when it comes to constitutional reform. The laws on special status and amnesty have still not entered into force. Instead of alleviating the situation of the people living in the affected regions and rebuilding Donbas's economy, there is a policy of economic strangulation of the region. The blockade imposed by Kyiv – the freezing of payments, the blocking of food and medical supplies and tight restrictions of freedom of movement – is driving the population out of the country's common political, economic and humanitarian space. The situation is no better as regards the other provisions of the Minsk agreements.

We urge Kyiv to fully honour its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

The question of the OSCE's monitoring of other segments of Ukraine's border with Russia can be resolved. However, this requires direct contact with those who currently control the corresponding border crossing points on the Ukrainian side. Obviously, Kyiv is unwilling to do this. I repeat: we are regularly patrolling our side of the border and we have no problems there. It is Ukraine's right to control the Ukrainian side of the border. Nevertheless, the issue regarding the security of the entire border could be effectively addressed with a definitive political settlement and the granting of special status to certain regions in Donbas.

At our last meeting, the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United States of America provided us with some kind of chronology of events, which he had produced himself. It comes as no surprise that this chronology is lacking several key events, without which it cannot be taken seriously. Let me remind you of these events:

- The illegal *coup d'état* in Kyiv following the signing of the 21 February agreement on the formation of a national unity government. It was carried out with the direct encouragement of the United States and some European Union countries;

- The start of the so-called anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine in late April, which turned into a military operation against Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, instead of political dialogue with those who disagreed with the change of government in Kyiv;
- The large-scale July offensive by the Ukrainian army, other security structures and oligarch-controlled volunteer battalions against the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which led to thousands of civilian casualties and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The split in Ukrainian society, where previously the various population groups had lived in peace, was not caused by Russia. It was caused by deliberate external interference and an attempt to impose “the only correct choice” on the Ukrainian people by force, severing their historical ties with Russia. When some people disagreed with this “choice”, instead of normal dialogue, tanks and aircraft were used against them.

Our common goal is to do all we can to ensure that the dividing lines in Ukraine do not deepen but are gradually obliterated through dialogue, national reconciliation and accord within Ukraine’s present-day borders.

Thank you for your attention.